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in the Corn

Edith Franklin Wyatt

Wyatt
NB

THE WIND IN THE CORN

THE WIND IN THE CORN

AND

OTHER POEMS

BY

EDITH FRANKLIN WYATT

NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

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NEW YORK LONDON
1917

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PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

TO

PHYLLIS WYATT BROWN

THIS BOOK IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED

Of the poems in this volume, "Winter Wheat," "Huron," and "A Twilight Tale," are here published for the first time. For permission to reprint the other lyrics, the writer thanks the editors of *Scribner's Monthly*, *Harper's Monthly*, the *Atlantic Monthly*, *Poetry, a Magazine of Verse*, *Collier's Weekly*, the *Saturday Evening Post*, *McClure's Magazine*, the *Woman's World*, *Everybody's Magazine*, *Contemporary Verse*, and the *Forum*.

PREFACE

In the last three years the farthest and stillest fields of our national life have been stirred by the breath of the world-war.

Now that our American army is in France we have been thinking with especial gravity of what our country has to send overseas, both from her broad-soaring grain-lands and from her spiritual resources.

It is in an attempt to express both something of the dream of democracy—her vision of the pursuit of happiness—and some of the overland ways of the living presence of our country that this book has been written. Not because I am so presumptuous as to think my songs are adequate to their great theme, but because I hope that a part at least of the pleasure I found in that attempt may speak in them, I have been glad to

collect them now, a token of my own sense of our overland dream.

The consciousness of movement over a variety of country is probably an element of most Americans' conception of their nation. This consciousness is indeed I believe our largest common background.

Even if we were to leave unconsidered everyone of foreign birth or fatherhood, and refer only to the heritage we call "purely American" yet Americans undoubtedly have in so very few cases a fixed, local habitation for several generations, that if we depended for a love and understanding of our country on the persons devoted to her future through the intensity of their passion for ancestral acres, we might be rather at a loss for national feeling.

With us this national feeling is not so much for the ways of Dove, nor so strongly localized

and static an emotion as with other peoples. Whether for better or worse, our traditions from our mothers and fathers, our general memory and outlook on our own lives include the realization of more than one region, the charm of unity in variety, the fusing grace of an overland spirit.

In our country's thoughts, in her swift-changing moods, in her ragged-built cities, the many-colored movement of her mesas and arroyos, in the profound cadences of her tremendous fresh waters, each of us has known, in happy moments, the intimate glance, the mysterious and beautiful touch of her poetry.

My songs may never in the world tell to the listener the chords that I can hear them singing. It is enough if a chance note remind him of some song he has himself heard rising in a quiet hour from one of these great sources.

E. F. W.

Chicago, 1917.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
The Wind in the Corn	1
The Cup of Life	4
One for All and All for One	6
To a River God	10
Niagara	15
Every Day	18
Winter Wheat	20
On the Great Plateau	26
Friendship	30
An October Evening	31
The Breath of Life	33
The Shepherd Day	35
Summer Hail	38
An Unknown Country	42
Sympathy	47
Overland	50
Hesperus	54
A Wayside Fire	56
A Twilight Tale	59
April Weather	64
To F. W.	65
November in the City	68
An April Quest	73
On the Shore	76
An Arizona Wind	79

PAGE

THE FROST ON THE PANE 82
THE GYPSY ROSE 84
TO A CITY SWALLOW 87
THE CLOVER 90
HURON 92
THE AUGUST SKY 94
LAKE WINDS 96
FOREST FIRE 97
NIGHTFALL IN ARIZONA 101
A MIDLAND TWILIGHT 103
MARCH HORSES 106
CITY WHISTLES 109
A CITY AFTERNOON 112
CITY VESPERS 115
A CITY EQUINOCTIAL 119
BEHIND THE DAY 123

THE WIND IN THE CORN

THE WIND IN THE CORN

FAR away, far away, someone is going, there—
Someone invisible, rider and horse:
Now a sheaf, now a leaf, tipping and blowing, bear
Naught of his tale to me, only his course.

Riding through lowland corn, riding through highland corn,
Flicking the furrows from seaboard to sea,
Riding through shoreland, and river-locked island corn,
Traveler, traveler, who can you be?

Yellow the sundown. The bright-terraced valley-top

Breathes all in silence: and, still, down the vale,
Far, where the corn-furrows' gold-dappling alleys drop
Answers the traveler, "Brief is my tale."

"Long have I ridden by cornfield and moorland, now;
Out of the bourn of the morning I came—
Ridden the fields where the steeps and the shore-lands bow
Heaped with earth's richnesses. Want is my name."

Yellow the twilight. The plume-terraced valley-top
Breathes forth its heart from the black fragrant loam.
Traveler, when will your long, hungry journey stop?

When will the bounty of earth be your
home?
Tall stands the corn on the lowlands and high-
lands, now:
Full-fold and full-fold the bottom-lands leap
Seaward. The shorelands, the tassel-flocked is-
lands' prow,
Wave, and close-serried soar prairie and steep.

Thousand-rayed, thousand, the gold-dappling al-
leys swing,
Comfort me—rock me to peace in their sweep:
Some day, oh, some day, the horseman will hear
them sing,
"Drop your rein, traveler! Rest in my deep!"

THE CUP OF LIFE

Of all the vintage in the world
  One single cup of wine,
One cup of life, one cup of death,
  One destiny is mine.

I'd not give up that special cup
  My fates have poured for me,
For any other in all time,
  Nor all eternity.

For in my time, and in my place
  No foot has stood before.
My taste of fortune fine or base
  No lips can know of, more.

So might I choose, I would not lose
  For nectared draughts divine

This deep-spiced vintage here and now,
In mine own place and time.

Mine be the strength to lift it up
In pride: drink full and free,
And, standing, drain the mortal cup
My fates have poured for me.

ONE FOR ALL AND ALL FOR ONE

"SKIPPER, when will my ship come in?
Silver and gray and brown
The cloud-rack rifts and the morning lifts
Over my trading town.
Out of the bourn of the break of day
Flush with the morning star,
The *Hope of my Happiness* sailed away
Over the harbor-bar."

"Turn back, turn back to your trading town,
Nor walk on the quay with me.
For many a ship of dreams goes down
That sails on the unknown sea
Turn to work for your luck, nor wait
In the wind and the misty rime.
For the only one who may stay for fate
Is myself: and my name is Time."

"Skipper, when will my ship come in?
The whistles of noon-day blow.
The sun burns high in the masted sky.
The tides and the great winds flow.
Aught she may bring me, now, I need—
Silver or gold or tin.
The trade winds blow and the gulf streams flow.
When will my ship come in?"

"When the light of the soul of the day blew down,
And the morning star throbbed and paled,
Out of the heart of your trading town
A myriad dream ships sailed.
Out of the bourn of the break of day,
Out to the open main,
Your fathers' and sons' ships sail away,
And never come back again."

"Skipper, the evening is clear and white.
My long day's work is done:

And over the fort of the harbor height
I hark for the sunset gun.
A year and a day and a life ago,
Out to the wind and the rack,
Our million desires have sailed away,
And none of them yet come back.
But if my ship should come sailing back
Whatever her cargo be,
Lade her with iron and rope and jack
And turn her again to sea.
And bid her stay till the pulse of day
Be dead and the stars melt down
And she bring all our ships that have sailed away,
Back to our trading town."

The trade-winds were blowing, the gulf-streams were flowing,
And yellow the flood-touched sun.
The whole horizon was sail-swept sky,
When the harbor-mouth shook with the gun:

And gold ships and silver steered proud from the
West,
Where in past the harbor bar,
The *Hope of his Happiness* rode with the rest,
Flush with the vesper star.

TO A RIVER GOD

THERE is a river flowing,
Fast flowing toward the sea;
Past bluff and levee blowing,
His mantle glances free;
Past pine and corn and cotton-field
His foam-winged sandals flee.

From dock and dune and reedy brake,
Through lock and basin wide,
Long-linked lagoon and terraced lake
Drop down to watch his pride,
And rivers North and rivers South
To speed his coursing ride.

Wheat and corn, and corn and wheat,
Cotton-drift and cane,

Serried lances rippling fleet,
Dappled tides of grain,
Dip beside him where he goes
Flying to the main.

By full-sown fields and fallow,
By furrows green and bluff,
Past bar and rock-bound shallow,
His torrent washes gruff.
By tamarack and mallow,
Past bottom-land and bluff.

From highland and from lowland,
Farm, town, and city see
His foam-winged footsteps going,
His mantle blowing free,
Past dusky mart and black-spired crown,
Fast flowing to the sea.

Wheat and corn, and corn and wheat,
Cotton-drift and cane,

Serried lances rippling fleet,
Dappled tides of grain,
Dip beside him where he goes
Speeding to the main.

His foot runs on the ages' bed
Of gullied cave and rock,
With bison skull and arrowhead
His yellow waters lock,
Past vanished trails and tribal dead
His fleecing currents flock.

By bluff and levee blowing,
By oats and rye unshorn,
His silver mantle flowing,
Flicks east and west untorn,
Unfurling from Itasca to
Louisiana's horn.

Wheat and corn, and corn and wheat,
Cotton-drift and cane,

Serried lances rippling fleet,
Dappled tides of grain,
Dip beside him where he goes
Rushing to the main.

What tribute, racing spirit,
What token will you take,
Through stain and desecration,
Past town and terraced lake,
To distant sea and nation
From cotton, corn, and brake?

What tribute are you bearing
Past plain and pluming tree,
By bluff and levee faring
On foam-winged footsteps free—
What beauty for the hold of time,
And souls unborn, to see?

Poplar on the Northern steep,
Cotton-drift and cane,

Wheat and corn, and corn and wheat,
Rippled tides of grain,
Brake and bayou ask of you
Buoyed toward the main.

By rock and cavern blowing,
Flocked field and pluming tree,
Past bluff and levee going
On foam-winged footsteps free,
By rapid, lock, and terraced lake,
Forever to the sea.

NIAGARA

Cool the crystal mist is falling where my song is calling, calling
Over highland, over lowland, fog-blown bluff, and bouldered shore:
Proud my snow-rapt currents leaping from Superior's green keeping,
Down from Michigan's gray sweeping toward the Rapids' eddied floor.

Rain, hail, dew, and storm cloud swing me; from the heights the hollows wring me;
Filtered clay and field silt bring me silent through the dark-breathed loam,
Down the thousand-terraced highlands till the sky-land lake beds wing me—

Flying down and down in beauty through the
chasm's flocking foam.

Down from Huron, down from Erie, though the
wild duck's wing grow weary,
Tribe and nation part and vanish like the spin-
drift haze of morn,
Fresh my full-fold song is falling and my voice
is calling, calling
Down from far-poured lake and highland as
I sang when I was born.

South, North, East, and West untiring speak my
brother seas in splendor,
Tell their dominant desiring, claimant over
coast and main.
Mine the choiring of a woman's chord immortal,
of surrender—
Of the splendor of desiring, deep to give and
give again.

Chord of star-fused loam and silver-surgent lake
cloud's generation,
Here I sing the earth's still dreaming down my
green-poured currents' length,
Voice of river-rocking valleys, rich heart plains,
and heights' creation,
Clear-veiled chord that locked in you your
mother's life, your father's strength.

Cool the fog-flocked mists are swinging. Soar,
my dream; and silver winging,
Call my air-hung music ringing, toward the
crystal-buoyed morn—
Full-fold music from the highlands, where my
splendor's voice is singing.
Fresh from flooded shores and sky lands as I
sang when I was born.

EVERY DAY

Every day fresh bread and sweet
Gladly, thankfully I eat,
Buttered loaf and crumb and crust
Given me a child of dust—
Child of dust though I may be
Here is joy is meant for me.

Crystal water every day
I may drink upon my way,
Fresh as dews of star-eyed Spring
Cool as airs the light winds bring—
Child of dust though I may be
Here is joy is meant for me.

Every night the arms of sleep
Take me to a refuge deep

Some far-off and silent place
In the utmost caves of space—
Child of dust though I may be
Here is joy is meant for me.

Though I still must strive and cry
For some lot more fine than I,
Some far crown of mist or gold,
Here are gifts of kindly mold—
Gifts to take on bended knee,
Joy I know is meant for me.

WINTER WHEAT

RIDING over height and prairie, when the winter
hours grew long,
Once I heard, afar and airy, something loose a
wayside song.

Something sang:—"Wind and rain, dance on
road and street.
Husked the corn. Ground the grain. Green the
winter wheat,
Singing in the sleet!
Husked the corn, and ground the grain. Green
the winter wheat!
Still are flock and field now, over hill and swale;
Corn in shock and bield now; cricket hushed
and quail.

Bright alfalfa shut your eyes. Sweet tobacco
sleep.
Under stormy-pluming skies, humming watch I
keep,
Where the Youhiogheny flows, washing hoarse
and gruff,
Where the Alleghany goes, over vale and bluff,
All around the frost-furred stables, sheltered
fleece and horn,
Icy-splintered fence and gables, crackling hedge
and thorn.
Overland, overland, field and pasture sail.
Down the wold the furrows fold, brown along
the rail.
Many-toned through Minnesota, singing in the
sleet,
Snowy-furled through cold Dakota, wings the
winter wheat.

Fling it, sow it, East and West, while the frost rides forth!
Oats and barley sleep and rest! Swing it South and North!
Sow it where the swallows sing, cane and cotton sleep!
Strow it on the wild-duck's wing up the Northern steep!
Husked the corn. Ground the grain. Green the winter wheat!

"Spring-time days, summer ways, verdant leaf and dew
Thrill with countless-chorded praise. Winter songs are few.
Winter songs are few.
Not alone the storm-wind chills—not the storm-wind most—
But the fog along the hills, creeping damp and frost.

Who shall like the earth and listen, tell the tune
her life-time knows,
Now no dancing tree-tops glisten, now no crystal
glory blows,
Through her lesser days, down her muted ways?
Let me strow and sing it now, where the wild-
ducks cry,
Swift arise and answer now, full and proudly,
'I!

I, the winter wheat, singing in the sleet!
I will hear her. I will hearken; past the fogs
and battling snows
Bring through hours that dim or darken, what
the heart of winter knows;
Swinging through the storm-wind's soaring, sing-
ing through the ice-cut gale,
Through the tempests thick, out-pouring over
farthest height and swale,
Through her muted days, down her lesser ways,

East and West, North and South, deeply sing and call,
Overland and overland and in and through it all—
Every dreariness and blast, through it all and to the last!'"

As I rode through twilight's portal, while the winter hours grew long,
Once the voice of love immortal sang my soul a wayside song.
Let my day in dark be ended, let the fates at last defeat.
Down the roads of rapture splendid, I have heard the winter wheat.
Fling it, sow it, East and West, while the frost rides forth!
Oats and barley sleep and rest. Swing it South and North!

Sow it where the swallows sing, cane and cotton
sleep!
Strow it on the wild-duck's wing up the North-
ern steep!
Husked the corn. Ground the grain. Green the
winter wheat!

ON THE GREAT PLATEAU

In the Santa Clara Valley, far away and far
away,
Cool-breathed waters dip and dally, linger to-
wards another day,
Far and far away—far away.

Slow their floating step but tireless, terraced
down the Great Plateau.
Towards our ways of steam and wireless, silver-
paced the brook-beds go.
Past the ladder-walled Pueblos, past the orch-
ards, pear and quince,
Where the gate-locked rivers' ebb flows, miles
and miles the valley glints,
Shining backwards, singing downwards, towards
horizons blue and bay:

All the roofs the roads ensconce so dream of
visions far away—
Santa Cruz and Ildefonso, Santa Clara, Santa
Fé.
Ancient, sacred fears and faiths, ancient, sacred
faiths and fears—
Some were real, some were wraiths—Indian,
Franciscan years,
Built the Khivas, swung the bells, while the wind
sang plain and free
"Turn your eyes from visioned hells! Look as
far as you can see!"
In the Santa Clara valley far away and far away,
Dying dreams divide and dally, crystal-terraced
waters sally—
Linger towards another day, far and far away—
far away.
As you follow where you find them, up along the
high Plateau,

In the hollows left behind them, Spanish chapels
fade below—
Shaded court and low corrals. In the vale the
goatherd browses.
Hollyhocks are seneschals by the little buff-
walled houses.
Over grassy swale and alley have you ever seen
it so—
Up the Santa Clara Valley, riding on the Great
Plateau?
Past the ladder-walled Pueblos, past the orchards,
pear and quince,
Where the trenchéd waters' ebb flows, miles and
miles the valley glints,
Shining backwards, singing downwards towards
horizons blue and bay.
All the haunts the bluffs ensconce so breathe of
visions far away,

As you ride near Ildefonso, back again to Santa Fé.

Pecos, mellow with the years—tall-walled Taos —who can know

Half the storied faiths and fears haunting green New Mexico?

Only, from her open places, down arroyos blue and bay,

One wild grace of many graces dallies towards another day,

Where her yellow tufa crumbles, something stars and grasses know,

Something true that crowns and humbles shimmers from the Great Plateau:

Blows where cool-paced waters dally from the stillness of Puyé,

Down the Santa Clara Valley through the world from far away—

Far and far away—far away.

FRIENDSHIP

Nor mine are purple muscadine,
Green wine and precious salve.
I bring a token more divine
And give you what I have.
My roof, my road, my life's abode,
The winds that scent my day,
My fire-light's shade, my fig-tree's load
Are yours upon your way.
But ask no foregone beauty,
Nor money, musk nor wine:
Nor call the name of duty.
Of stuff far more divine,
The gladness in whose name I'll give
You anything that's mine.

AN OCTOBER EVENING

CICADA notes repeating light, the field-winds full and mellow,
And chording crickets keep tonight my still-roofed country town.
Her sprinkled turf breathes sweet tonight. Her even lamps bloom yellow
Along the leafy street tonight, broad-shadowed, fresh and brown.

A step comes down the highway; a step goes down the by-way
From Thursday night towards Friday, down my dark-roofed country town—
Walks free towards far tomorrows, unguessed success and sorrows

Along the gabled street tonight, all velvet-ridged
and brown.

Cicada chords and crickets keep still time. Burn,
lamps, burn yellow.
Breathe, prairie fragrance cool tonight, from
wide-rolled swale and down.
Blow, highland wind. Blow, lowland wind. Rise,
marsh-wind, rich and mellow.
I think my country's soul tonight walks through
my country town.

THE BREATH OF LIFE

THE gift of life was given me,
More wonderful than earth or sea,
Than cloud or star of changing skies
Where night and day resplendent rise—
The gift of life.

A thousand colors flash and glow,
A thousand odors waft and blow;
Or harsh or soft or crystal clear,
A thousand notes sound far and near—
The gift of life.

To work, to sleep, to work again,
Rejoice and laugh and suffer pain
Is mine: to know in bliss or ruth
The splendor of the real truth—
The gift of life.

Although that time at last must come
When all sweeps past me blank and dumb
And I untouched as shard or stone;
Perhaps forever—yet I've known
The gift of life.

THE SHEPHERD DAY

THE silver-hooded morning
  Spoke freshly to my heart
From some high misty pasture-land
  Where cool leaves blew apart.
I saw his cloak glance on the strand
  Past cobbled street and mart.

"I am the shepherd morning,
  I am the shepherd day
Come, foot and soul, and walk with me
  Wherever runs the way,
By dusty road and green-cropped lea,
  Through weather clear and gray."

"O fleet-foot morning, mock not me;
  Too swift you speed apace.

Drop your adorning down for me
And let me see your face—
Now I have crossed with you till noon
The meads and steeps of space."

"Divine am I, your master,
The day of life you'll live,
Come faster and come faster on
And take the roads I give."
And down the craggy pass I saw
His mantle fugitive.

The river frogs were calling "Hark!"
And bush and sward and mold
Were blue and stark with dew and dark
And fragrant in the cold.
Half sheltered in a byre unsought
We found a wayside fold.

Then backward glanced my master day,
And as he turned apace

His hooded mantle dropped away
With free and random grace;
And only when my guide was gone
I looked upon his face.

Far in a mountain pasture-land
I heard his footsteps go
Among the sapphire-terraced stars,
The night's wide dark and snow.
Ahead he dropped my welkin's bars
To fields I could not know.

"I am the shepherd morning,
I am the shepherd day
Come, foot and soul, and walk with me
Wherever runs the way,
By rocky road and green-cropped lea,
Through weather clear and gray."

SUMMER HAIL

ONCE the heavens' gabled door
Opened: down a stabled floor,
Down the thunders, something galloped far and
wide,
Glancing far and fleet
Down the silver street—
And I knew of nothing, nothing else beside.
Pitty patty polt—
Shoe the wild colt!
Here a nail! There a nail!
Pitty patty polt!

Good and badness, die away.
Strength and swiftness down the day,

Dapple happy down my glancing silver street!
Oh, the touch of summer cold!—
Beauty swinging quick and bold,
Dipping, dappling where the distant roof-tops meet!

Pitty patty polt—
Shoe the wild colt!

Listen, dusty care:
Through a magic air,
Once I watched the way of perfect splendor ride,
Swishing far and gray,
Buoyant and gay—
And I knew of nothing, nothing else beside.
Good and badness, go your ways,
Vanish far and fleet.
Strength and swiftness run my days,
Down my silver street.

Little care, forevermore
Be you lesser than before.

Mighty frozen rain,
Come! oh, come again!
Let the heavens' door be rended
With the touch of summer cold—
Dappling hoof-beats clatter splendid,
Infinitely gay and bold!

Pitty patty polt—
Shoe the wild colt!
Here a nail and there a nail!
Pitty patty polt!

Once the heavens' gabled door
Opened: down the stabled floor,
Down the thunders, something galloped wide and far;
Something dappled far and fleet,
Glancing down my silver street,

And I saw the ways of life just as they are.

Pitty patty polt.
Shoe the wild colt!
Here a nail! There a nail!
Pitty patty polt!

AN UNKNOWN COUNTRY

I

WHERE do I go
Down roads of sleep,
Behind the blue-brimmed day?
No more I know her silvered sweep
Nor colors clear nor gray,
Nor women's ways
Nor those of men,
Nor blame, nor praise.
Where am I, then?

II

Oh, fragrantly
The airs of earth arise
In waking hours of light,
While vagrantly

Sea symphonies
Of changing sound surprise;
Till for a space one goes
Beyond the salt and snows
And claimant tides along the wide-stretched
beach,
Beyond the last, faint reach
Of odor, sight and sound, far forth—far forth—
Where neither South nor North
Points down the roads unguessed,
Where East is not, nor West;
At night down roads of sleep,
Of dreamless sleep,
Past all the compassed ways the reason tells
To unknown citadels.

III

Just as one turns, and while day's dusk-breathed
blue

And music, many-dappled merge in flight,
Half in a dream, one finds a tale is true
That down one's memory sings, still and light.
Just as the spirit turns,
Half-dreaming one discerns
Deeply the tale is true
That long ago one knew:
Of how a mermaid loved a mortal knight;
And how, unless she died, she still must change,
And leave his human ways, and go alone
At intervals where seas unfathomed range
Through coral groves around the ocean's throne,
Where cool-armed mermaids dive through crystal hours,
And braid their streaming hair with pearls, and sing
Among the green and clear-lit water flowers,
The lucent splendors of their ocean king.

IV

Like hers our ways on earth,
Who, from our day of birth,
Would die, unless we slept—
Must die, unless for hours,
Beyond our senses' powers,
Down soundless space we leapt.

V

Beyond the deepest roll
Of pain's and rapture's sweep,
Where goes the human soul
That vanishes in sleep?

VI

Down dreamless paths unguessed, beyond the
senses' powers,
Beyond the breath of fragrance, sound and light,

As once through crystal, unremembered hours
The mermaid dived who loved a mortal knight,
Far forth—far forth—
Beyond the South or North,
Past all the compassed ways the day has shown,
To live divine and deep at night down roads of
sleep,
In citadels unknown.

SYMPATHY

As one within a moated tower,
I lived my life alone;
And dreamed not other granges' dower,
Nor ways unlike mine own.
I thought I loved. But all alone
As one within a moated tower
I lived. Nor truly knew
One other mortal fortune's hour.
As one within a moated tower,
One fate alone I knew.
Who hears afar the break of day
Before the silvered air
Reveals her hooded presence gray,
And she, herself, is there?

I know not how, but now I see
The road, the plain, the pluming tree,
The carter on the wain.
On my horizon wakes a star.
The distant hillsides wrinkled far
Fold many hearts' domain.
On one the fire-worn forests sweep,
Above a purple mountain-keep
And soar to domes of snow.
One heart has swarded fountains deep
Where water-lilies blow:
And one, a cheerful house and yard,
With curtains at the pane,
Board-walks down lawns all clover-starred,
And full-fold fields of grain.
As one within a moated tower
I lived my life alone;
And dreamed not other granges' dower

Nor ways unlike mine own.

But now the salt-chased seas uncurled
And mountains trooped with pine
Are mine. I look on all the world
And all the world is mine.

OVERLAND

OVERLAND, overland, sings the rail,
Riding from sea to sea.
The stars sink down past the dwindled town
And pale through the flying tree.
The daystars sink; and the morning's brink
Brims through the cinders' flail.
Overland, overland, swings the sun;
Overland rings the rail.
Cut away, cut away, curve through the ridge
Sapphire before, next the sky.
The cool-buoyed river-chords call through the bridge
Where the river's arms wave goodby.
Through the shantied day on the right-of-way,
By the roundhouse roof, pebbly and tarred,

Ring your bell, swing your bell, pace and tell
Your tale through the switch-veined yard.
Midland, my midland, her grain-flickered down
Passes, and dairy-town dale—
Prairie-town swale, soaring free and brown—
Overland swings the rail.
Overland, overland, overland, fly!
Upward and upward, ride!
Cry from the rock to the crystal sky,
High on the Great Divide!
Down, circling down, turn the racketing brake
By the rainbow-striped desert's gleam—
Whinnying pony, wash dry and stony,
Moqui's and Navajo's dream.
Past, as the yesterday's daybreak rack
The silver scarred cave-cliff's bar.
Heliotrope, heliotrope, folded back
Mesa-land dips afar.

Down to the sea spreads the clear plaided green
Of the reservoir's cloak unfurled—
Oh! why should a myriad lives be mean
In such a magnificent world?

The nerves of my country's wide work and way
And the nerves of her life are steel.
They can pulse. They can move. In another's day,
At last they will know and feel.
From a shore unknown to an unknown shore—
Our journey is over and done.
Gold pours the light on the ocean's floor.
Hark to the sunset gun!
For our gods, and their human sacrifice,
Will flash like the Aztec's dream
Past by the path of the thing that flies
On with a nameless gleam.

Overland, overland, swings the rail,
Riding from sea to sea.
The stars sink down past the dwindled town
And pale through the flying tree.
The daystars sink, and tomorrow's brink
Brims through the cinders' flail.
Overland, overland, sings the sun!
Overland throbs the rail!

HESPERUS

THE Vesper star that quivers there,
A wonder in the darkening air,
Still holds me longing for the height
And splendor of the full of night.

Come, quiet night. The day's blue bars
Have dropped and let out all the stars
To flock through heaven till the light.
The day is done. Come, quiet night.

Come, quiet night. My day is done—
My little day of work and fun;
I'm tired. Hold me close and light
In your wide silence, quiet night.

So, when I see day's last blue spark,
My prides, my shames, my work, grow dark,
And still is all life's wrong and right,
Deep may I know the perfect night.

A WAYSIDE FIRE

THE day was cold along the road; and heart and
foot did tire.
We stopped a while. We loosed the load, and
built a wayside fire.
Hot soup we had, and cheese and bread—a bit to
sup and eat.
Sing, blue flame, blue! Sing, red flame, red!
The juniper burned sweet.
And always, always, always hence, when fainting
spirits tire,
I wish that we would have the sense to stop and
light a fire.
Along the road, along the road, down pours the
glancing rain,
But easily I lift my load, now I am warm again.

For I have heard inside the fire the song the wild-
bird knows,
And watched dry sticks from brake and byre
bloom in a golden rose—
Flame in a fragrant, golden rose, a crimson light,
a praise.
Stream, happy fires, and smoking snows, and sing
me all your blaze!
"Flame in a praise? What praise?" you say.
The dark will come, you know,
Along the road, along the road, where you and
I shall go—
Hard frost and rust, dank heat and must, dead
sticks and winds that tire.
Then, let us light by all this dust, the splendors
we admire!
And hear the airs that course great hearts, and
talk of islands far,

Of glory, comfort, richest arts, and those best
things we are!
Along the road, along the road, down pours the
glancing rain,
But easily I lift my load, now I am warm again.
For I have heard inside the fire, the song the
wildbird knows,
And watched dry sticks from brake and byre
blaze in a golden rose.

A TWILIGHT TALE

THE little winds of twilight
Ran down their silver hill.
"Come home," they said, "my darling.
The night is fresh and still—
So still," they said, "my darling,
Those distant calls are clear
That in the clanging day-time
Were far and dim to hear."
My yellow-wimpling day-time
Had passed me fast and free
With sparkled bells and play-time
And cryings from the sea.
With haste and waste and worrying
And working in the sun,
I'd hardly harked, for hurrying,
Before my day was done.

"For you we've lit the fire, dear,
Of peaty earth and dew.
With quicker hands than hire, dear,
We've swept the hearth for you.
For you we've spread the supper-cloth,
Refresh and rest you deep.
Creation is your home, dear,
For work and play and sleep."
The crystal air of happiness
Flew where their voices cried—
The winds that slipped their hands in mine,
Swift running by my side.

"Oh, think no more of bad and good!
The broad-spread night is blue.
Our souls are brook-springs through the wood.
Our step is dark-lit dew:
And dust that makes the prairie:
And dust that makes the stars,

And makes your soul we whisper to
By night-fall's gray-dropped bars.
Creation is your home, dear:
The seacoast's salt-chased dark:
The fragrant grass and loam, dear;
And all the tides that hark;
The city spires, the city heights;
Black earth and fire and foam;
The silent hillside's scattered lights—
Creation is your home."

Oh happiness—oh happiness,
You ran so far away,
I thought your tune had passed my heart
With sunset and the day—
The yellow-wimpled daytime
That ran so fast and free,
With sparkled bells and play-time,
And cryings from the sea,

With pain and stain and worrying
And working in the sun.
But now I know that happiness
Speaks when the day is done:
And still and deep, by plain and steep,
By city wall and dome
The sister winds of twilight sing
"Creation is your home—
For work and play and sleep," they sing
Along their silver hill.
"Come home," they call, "my darling.
The night is fresh and still.
So still," they say, "my darling,
Those distant calls are clear,
That in the clanging day-time
Were far and dim to hear.
Oh, think no more of bad and good!
The broad-spread night is blue.

Our souls are brook-springs through the wood.
Our step is clear-touched dew:
And dust that makes the prairie:
And dust that makes the stars,
And makes your soul we whisper to,
By night-fall's gray-dropped bars."

APRIL WEATHER

If you could have a perfect day
To dream of when your life were done,
Would you choose one all clear, all gay,
If you could have a perfect day—
The airs above the wide green way
Sheer virgin blue with crystal sun,
If you could have a perfect day
To dream of when your life were done?

Or would you have it April's way
Haphazard rain, haphazard sun,
Divine and sordid, clear and gray,
Dyed like these hours' own craft and play,
All shot with stains of tears and clay,
Haphazard pain, haphazard fun—
If you could have a perfect day
To dream of when your life were done?

TO F. W.

You are my companion,
Down the silver road,
Still and many-changing,
Infinitely changing,
You are my companion.

Something sings in lives—
Days of walking on and on—
Deep beyond all singing,
Wonderful past singing.

Wonderful our road,
Long and many-changing,
Infinitely changing.
This, more wonderful—

We are here together,
You and I together,
I am your companion.
You are my companion,
My own, true companion.

Let the roadside fade—
Morning on the mountain-top
Hours along the valley,
Days of walking on and on
Pulse away in silence,
In eternal silence.
Let the world all fade
Break and pass away.
Yet will this remain,
Deep beyond all singing,
My own true companion,
Beautiful past singing.

We were here together—
On this earth together.
I was your companion.
You were my companion,
My own true companion.

NOVEMBER IN THE CITY

I

To-NIGHT the rain blows down from misty place
Above the roof-tops where the pigeons fly:
And quick the steps; intent, the city's faces
That say that we must hurry—you and I.
Oh, why? So much speeds through this twiligh
rain-time,
That's not worth keeping up with. By-and-by
We'll wonder why we always knew the train
time,
And yet knew not November—you and I.

II

In quiet let us hark. Not till we listen
Shall any song arise for you and me;

Nor ever this broad-stippling music glisten
Twice-told at twilight down the city sea.
The fog-horns call. The lake-winds rush. Just lately
I watched the city lights bloom star on star
Along the streets: and terrace-spaced and stately
Touch moated height and coronet afar.
November's winds blow towards the garnered grain-land.
Blue-buoyed all the shepherd whistles bay:
And flocking down Chicago's dusk-barred main-land
The steam and fog-fleeced mists run, buff and gray.
Silence and sound. Wide echoes. Rain-dropped spaces.
Deep-rumbling dray and dipping trolley car.
Steps multitudinous and countless faces.
Along the cloudy street, lit star on star.

III

Oh, had you thought that only woods and oceans
Were meant to speak the truth to you and me—
That only tides' and stars' immortal motions
Said we are part of all eternity?
The rains that fall and fly in silver tangent,
The passing steps, the fogs that die and live,
These chords that pale and darken, hushed and plangent
Sing proud the praise of splendors fugitive.
For fleet-pulsed mists, and mortal steps and faces
More move me than the tides that know no years—
And music blown from rain-swept human places
More stirs me than the stars untouched with tears.
I think that such a night as this has never

Sung argent here before: and not again
With all these tall-roofed intervals that sever
These streets and corners, etched with lamp-lit rain
Tell just this cool-thrilled tale of Midland spaces
And lake-born mists, that black-lined building's prow
That cuts the steam, this dream in peopled places
That sings its deep-breathed beauty here and now.

IV

November winds wing towards the garnered grain-land.
The city lights have risen. Proud and free,
Far music swinging down the dusk-barred mainland
Cries we are part of all eternity.
Let me remember, let me rise and sing it!

For others may the mountains be the sign,
Sun, stars, the wooded earth, the seas that ring it,
Of melody immortal. Here is mine.
This night when rain blows down through Mid-
land spaces
And lake-born mists. A black-lined building's
prow
That cuts the steam. A dream in peopled places
That sings its deep-breathed beauty here and
now.

AN APRIL QUEST

Oh, once I heard an April wind
On hill-top, plain and lea,
"Drop all that ties your foot, behind;
And follow, follow me."

"I breathe the breath of vanished snows.
The combing clouds I ride.
In wild-flower woods my spirit blows.
Oh, follow swift beside."
By flood-lapped bluff and dipping boom
I walked the highland plain:
And fresh arose the earth's perfume
And cool dropped down the rain.

And happy, happy, happy, I
Beyond my thought or guess

Who chased beneath the changing sky
My unfound happiness.

For veiled and far the early star:
And scattered far and pale
Hepatica and dogtooth are
On April shore and trail.

By black-turned loam, by white flocked foam,
Where winds and water streamed,
I never found to carry home
The very flowers I dreamed.

More, more than what I missed or found,
The open-vaulted day,
The river chords, the fragrant ground,
The wind's wide voice and way—

"Oh, follow, follow, follow me
My pulses run and leap

By valley, plain and up-land lea
By foam-lapped bluff and steep.

"I breathe the breath of vanished snows
Of wild rose sprays unborn
Through cloud-racks cool my foot-step goes
Where high-swung mists are torn."

Down April roads, the rain-dropped wind
Ran coursing fresh and free.
"Oh, reck not what you lose or find.
But follow, follow me."

ON THE SHORE

GRAY the day and airy.
  Rain clouds swing and climb.
Tarry, spirit, tarry:
  Tarry, tarry, time.
Light your footsteps fall for me
  Walking on the shore.
Cool and still you call to me,
  Call me evermore.
Toward the morning, toward the main,
  Toward Saint Lawrence Bay,
Toward the daybreak's silver wain
  Dips the water's way.
Tree-top, tree-top, in the wind,
  Flag-flower, swamp, and brakes,
Rapids fleet as hart and hind,

Linked and dappling lakes,
Dune and mist and rain-touched lea—
Spirit on the shore,
Cool and still you call to me,
Call me evermore.
All the world's my halidome,
At your step divine,
All the earth mine own free home,
Winds and waters mine.
Mine the misty morning,
Sun-cloud, hail, and rime.
Tarry, spirit, tarry:
Tarry, tarry, time.
Mine to see the poplar quiver
In the ether's sweep;
Mine to hark to lake and river
Buoyed toward the deep.
Mine Arcturus airy
In his starry prime.

Tarry, spirit, tarry:
  Tarry, tarry time.
Mine to walk in glory
  Down the night and day,
Walk past breath, past life, past death,
  Down creation's way.
Would that through my lesser hours
  Full your cry would carry.
Tarry, tarry, time for me:
  Tarry, spirit, tarry.
In your voice I'd fain rejoice
  Deeply evermore,
Walking through my life divine,
  Walking on the shore.

AN ARIZONA WIND

THE canyon wind blows high and low,
Her voice calls fresh and deep.
From mesa, bluff and blue plateau
Her pine-brushed currents sweep,
Down turquoise ledge and valley
And thousand-terraced height
Past opal drop and alley
And fawn-veiled stairs of light.

Of sheep-land, and of cattle-land
She whispers still and swift.
Her flight has fanned the painted sand
Green spur and lilac drift,
Leapt river-bed and rapid-head
Down tawny crags and buff,

Paced caverned gulches dark and red
And hundred-portaled bluff.

Her touch stirred pine and piñon ways
Before the foot of man.
In Navajo dominion days
Through peopled cliffs she ran.
As soon as star and shadow sped,
Before the first green tree,
Before the Colorado fled,
Her soul turned towards the sea.

Oh, manifold and manifold
The canyon drops away:
And far the desert shimmers old
As night, and young as day:
And wide and free your music plays,
So dumb, so fully heard,
Like ocean tides and human ways
That speak without a word.

What are you many-chording wind
And what is it you say,
As light as life, as light as death,
Across the vibrant day?
So high you blow, so low you blow—
And yet so close and deep,
I hardly know from my own breath
The hushing air you keep.

I hardly know from my own breath
Your breath of sage and pine.
My fault, my force, my dream, my death
Throb in your life divine—
Divine as desert dust, the rock
In sapphire depths below
The vanished cliffman and the flock
Far on the blue plateau.

THE FROST ON THE PANE

Upon my glass at daybreak
Breathe star-built bluff
and byre
And fir and fern and forest
Of incandescent fire.

Compelling cloud and mistral,
That changed the air afar,
Locked close that lea of crystal
And wrought its every star.

What fused ten million crystals
In just that bluff and lea,
Fates far as clouds and mistrals,
Made what I am of me.

Gone fir and frond and forest
And vanished blue and byre
When through my glass at noon-
day
I see the sky's blue fire.

And light and still I wonder
To think of time when I
Shall be as ether under
The splendor of the sky.

THE GYPSY ROSE

In deep black loam, and sward serene
Inside a watered close,
In crimson airs and leafage green
There bloomed a garden rose.

"Come, love," I heard her sing and say,
Inside her garden wall—
"Or I may live my life away,
And not be loved at all."

Green winds and waters threw on her
Their joy for long and long
A week and more they blew on her
Their peace, and heard her song.

A breath beyond the garden spray,
Outside the garden close,
High, on the roadside's chance estray
There soared a pale wild rose.

"Oh, let me fling my fragrance far,
And let me live and sing
For clovered mist and common star,
And every passing thing—
This traveled way, the dust, the dray,
The barbed and stone-piled wall—
Or else I might have died today
And not have loved at all."

My whole heart filled: my pulses thrilled
Quick, as her singing sped.
But when, next day, I went her way,
The roadside rose was dead.

My garden's green is ash and mold.
My garden rose is gray;
Her crimson song forgot and cold;
Her fragrance, blown away.

But singing flushed through frost and must,
And soaring through the snows,
Above all winds' and fortunes' dust,
I hear the roadside rose.

TO A CITY SWALLOW

Over the height of the house-top sea, silver and blue and gray,
A swallow flies, in my city skies, and cries of my city May.

Up from the South, swallow, fly to the North, over the roof-top miles,
The pillaring stacks, and the steam-cloud racks, and the telegraph's argent files,
Rich man's and poor man's and beggarman's town, odors of pine and pitch,
Marbles and chalk on the hop-scotch walk, and racketing rail and switch,
Over a thousand close-housed streets with a million steps arow,

Where the nurses walk and the children talk and
the light-gowned women go—
Dock-roof, and dive-roof, and prison-house-roof,
pebbled and buff and brown.
Cry me the manifold souls' abodes, and the roads
of my trading town.
For more to me is my house-top sea, where your
hookèd wings fall and soar,
Than all of the echoes you trail for me of your
Spring on a woodland shore.
Oh, care-free, you flew to the crocused North,
when the breath of the first Spring woke,
And not of the ways of the jasmine far, but the
hours that are, you spoke;
And, free, as you flew to the melting North, a
myriad Springs ago,
A myriad more, and a myriad more will buoy
you swift from the snow,

To cry of the stir of the hours that are, as you
cry through my day to me—
Through the amethyst of the bright-whirled mist,
over a roof-top sea,
Where some window will open, afar, afar, and
some woman look out and say,
"A swallow flies in my city skies and cries of
my city May."

THE CLOVER

THE clover's grassy breath
To him who listeneth
Upon the pastured lea,
Is like the monotone
Of some far sheep-bell, blown
From tranquil Arcady.

The airs of that last rose
That late and crimson blows
And frosted dies,
Smell, as in green and dew,
The first, first rose that blew
In waking Paradise.

What fragrance, ages hence
Shall tell the listening sense
Of men who guess—

Men whose far lives shall range
On paths remote and strange—
Our happiness?

HURON

Oh, perfect beauty, grave and deep,
And pulsing in the sapphire sky,
Except in full-whelmed hours of sleep,
Where else in living do you lie?
Where else but in far tarns of sleep,
Blue fire of beauty, proud and deep?

From crystal keeps and bed-rock springs
Cerulean the waters blow
Where purple-furling Huron flings
Past island pines her folds of snow:
And proud and deep the welling foam
Breathes cool the breath of my still home.

The breath of my immortal home,
Of perfect beauty here for me,

Beyond the questing rivers' foam,
Beyond the surging of the sea—
Sheer, silent beauty proud and deep,
As pulsing skies and perfect sleep.

THE AUGUST SKY

SPARKLING in splendor, the Kite and the Dipper
Crossed the black welkin, and Scorpio's star
Lit on the runway stag, herdsman and skipper,
When I was dust, perhaps, bed-rock or spar.

Dust, fire, or dew, or the wind of the morning,
Foam of some seacoast unknown, on the deep,
Somewhere I lived in creation's adorning,
Still, on the nights when Joan walked with her sheep.

What was I dreaming and where did I wander,
All through the Augusts before I could know?
Crystal the Archer swept high over yonder:
Close to the zenith burned Vega's blue snow.

Glory on glory the night's coronation
  Circled the heavens before I was born—
Shone while I slept in the soul of creation
  Somewhere when Ruth wept for home in the
    corn.

Glory on glory the night's coronation
  Throbbed in a beauty past dream and desire,
Proud as I slept in the soul of creation,
  Breath of the morning or bed-rock or fire.

LAKE WINDS

KEEN, fleet and cool, on your silver-breathed way,
Whirling the cirrus-cloud, brushing the mire,
Far down the roads of the night and the day,
Sing me the name of my proudest desire.

Midland wind, inland wind, buoying low,
Flying on Michigan's gray-dappled deep,
Swing me the strength and the splendor you know
Once, ere the hour of my infinite sleep.

Fling them but once to me—once let me go
Straight to some goal through all mist or all mire,
Knowing no thought but to live, as you blow,
Free in the name of my proudest desire.

FOREST FIRE

DEEP my dreaming, fresh my waking
  Furled in fragrant leaf and mold,
When the brumal mists are quaking
  In the crimson-kindling cold.
In the scraggy copse I smolder,
  Swarthy brush and red-tipped thorn,
In the dank-edged leaves I molder,
  Switch the shock and light the corn.
On the yellow-rippling river,
  By the wood-pool's reeded edge,
Fleet my dappling shadows quiver
  Over auburn brake and sedge.
By the lake and sandy shallow
  Where the lonely trees aspire,
And the shingled shores reach sallow

Fiercely burns my tawny fire—
Lights the poplar solitary
Proud upon her windy dune
On a shore afar and faery—
Misted foam and calling loon.
Scarlet, fawn and gold my gleaming,
Full my music wide and still.
Through September smoke far-streaming
Fast I run down road and hill,
Crying "Follow, follow, follow!"
Tipping tree-tops tan and black,
Singing with the Southward swallow
As I flick the tamarack.
Free I blaze down mapled mountains,
Course the earth's veins black and deep,
Spray the birches' golden fountains,
Richly fleece ridge, bluff and steep.
Swift by wide-spaced slopes and regal
Swings my spark's far-flying flail,

Flying high as hawk and eagle,
  Low as runs the freckled quail.
Hop-vine, oak-vine, wood-bine sweeping,
  Trail and road-side bronze and brown;
Wide my leaping, close my reaping,
  Door-yard, eaves, and country-town.
Brown and red and bronze my gleaming
  Full my music broad and fleet,
Through October clouds full-creaming
  Down the mist-smoked city street—
Crying, "Follow, follow, follow!"
  Where the straight-spaced tree-tops plume
Singing with the Southward swallow,
  And the brown leaves' rustled flume.
Vine-hung lintel, porch-pale, alley
  Square and scattered streak of grass,
Cities of the plain and valley
  Smoke and mantle as I pass,
Crying "Follow, follow, follow!"

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Over tree-top, mire and moor,
Singing with the Southward swallow,
In the tide of my glamour.
One to me are shrine and alley,
Sacred grove and eaves of shame,
Mire-edged road and soaring valley
In my splendor's common flame—
Common, common, like the glory
Of the proud-piled Autumn skies
Where the rich winds blow their story,
"Every soul is born and dies!"
Deep my flame sings "Follow, follow!"
Down the splendor of my way,
Flying with the Southward swallow
Through the great year's passing day,
Through October, through September,
Till at last my burning breath
Throbs to silence in December—
In the speechless snow of Death.

NIGHTFALL IN ARIZONA

BLACK blows the cottonwood. Coolness abiding
Thrills in the air with the snow of the stars.
Navajo, Navajo, where are you riding?
Clear breathes the night on the plains' opal bars.

Long past the desert, the creek dry and stony,
Fleet on your trail towards the mountains' dark rim,
Far, far away cries your whinnying pony
High on the mesa's empurpling brim.

Distant tonight are my tribe and her cities,
Turbine and factory, engine and wheel,
Prides and disgraces and honors and pities,
Stone wall and brick wall and riveted steel.

Here where your flocks and your cattle are ranging,
Hogan and wickieup stand in the swale
Blanket and basket are trade and exchanging,
Traveler, tell me the end of your trail.

Free through the cool star-lit silences blowing
Throbs the swift night on your way's darkened blue.
Navajo, Navajo, where are you going?
Where your long trail ends mine will end too.

A MIDLAND TWILIGHT

THE cloud-plumed afternoon has flown along the
household street.
Leaf shadows flicker. Freshly strown the sprays
whir. Far and fleet
Hushed, furtive footsteps dodge and creep and
hunting voices call
"I spy," and "One, Two, Three for you," around
the street's still hall.
The little winds of twilight blow. Upon the
hop-scotch chalk
Home-turning footsteps come and go along the
dappled walk.
The little winds of twilight blow closed flower
and full-stirred tree,

And far and near a singing voice cries *"All Sorts Out, In Free!"*

The cloud-plumed afternoon has flown slow-winging green and bright
And all the dreams her hours have known turn with her towards the night,
The spacious night that quivers far in silver keeps and gray
Beyond that first cool snowdrop star above the roof-rimmed way.
Home and the night—profound for me, and happy their wide grace
Thrills through the wind, the full-stirred tree, fleet game and white-starred space.
Deep by their ways may my soul live as by her halidome,
Through all her cloud-plumed day-time hours: and when to my great home,

Home and the night at last I come, so may it
be for me—
Peace. Through my heart a fresh voice singing
"All Sorts Out, In Free!"

MARCH HORSES

Down the rainy roof-top, up the silver street,
Horses of the morning wind gallop far and fleet.
Over mist and tree-top, down the break of day.
Coursers of the cold-breathed wind swing me on your way.

Light you whinnied at the gabling, and afar I'd dreamed your stabling—
Heard you stamping in your stabling on the heaven's crystal floor,
Dreamed your waiting in the airy days of ice-locked January,
Through clear nights in February, past the pole-star lantern's door.

Gallop past the hoary Hyads, and the snowy-clustered Pleiads,
Over common, over open, over mud-flung road and plain,
Cloud-winged horses with your streaming manes and dappled fetlocks gleaming
Beautiful beyond my dreaming, down your yearly course again.

Over highway, over byway, every way of yours is my way,
Fog-smoked roof, and dripping alley, and the trail the wild duck cries,
Ragged mist and splashing byway, plashing eaves, and flooded highway,
Broken shore and full-flushed valley, and the hundred-hurdled skies.

Gallop, gallop swifter to me, thrill the strength of daybreak through me,

Twelve great winds of open heaven, in your
splendor fleet and free,
Winds above all pride and scorning, all self-
shame and self-adorning
As the naked stars of morning singing through
the bare-branched tree.

CITY WHISTLES

To H. M.

I

Now the morning winds are rising. Now the
morning whistles cry.
Fast their crescent voices dim the paling star.
Through the misted city mainland, wide their
questing summons fly
Many-toned—"O mortal, tell me who you are!"
Down the midland, down the morning, fresh
their sweeping voices buoy:
"Siren ship! Silver ship! Sister ship! Ahoy!
Sister ship ahoy! Ship ahoy!
What's the stuff of life you're made from? What
the cargo you must trade from?"

From afar their onward voices break the blue,
Crying, "Bring your gold or barley! Come to barter! Come to parley!
Ring the bell, and swing the bridge, and let me through."
Like some freighted ship that goes, where the city river flows,
Like a trading ship that questions, "Who are you?"
In among the river craft, as she rides by stack and shaft
Through Chicago from Sheboygan and the Soo.
"What's the stuff of life you're made from? What the cargo you convoy?
Ring the bell! Swing the bridge! Sister ship, ahoy!"

II

At last
The twilight rises fast.

"Hard was our day."
The scaling whistles say,
"Our jarred and jangled day."
Then all their clamors blow,
"Great was our day!"
And sing a tale of fate untold and fugitive,
Something spacious, something mordant, something gracious and discordant,
Mean and splendid, something all our lives here live.

III

Down the midland mists at twilight, have you heard their singing sweep,
Where their far-toned voices, many chorded, buoy—
And our mortal ways in wonder hail creation's unknown deep—
"Siren ship! Silver ship! Sister ship, ahoy!"

A CITY AFTERNOON

GREEN afternoon, serene and bright
  Along my street you sail away
Sun-dappled like a ship of light
  That glints upon a wimpled bay.

Afar, freight-engines call and toll:
  The sprays flash on the fragrant grass:
The children and the nurses stroll:
  The charging motors plunge and pass.

Invisibly the shadows grow,
  Empurpling in a rising tide
The walks where light-gowned women go,
  White curb, gray asphalt iris-dyed.

A jolting trolley shrills afar:
  Nasturtiums blow and ivy vines:

Wet scents of turf and black-smoothed tar
Float down the roof-trees' vergent lines.

Where will you go, my afternoon,
That glint so still and swift away
Blue-shaded like a ship of light
Bound outward from a wimpled bay?

Oh, thrilling, pulsing, dark and bright,
Shall you, your work, your brain, your mirth,
Fly into the immortal night
And silence of our mother earth?

She bore all Eden's green and dew
And Persia's scented wine and rose,
And, flowering white against the blue,
Acanthus leaf and marbled pose.

And deep the Mænad's choric dance,
Crusader's cross and heathen crest,

Lie sunk with rose and song and lance
All veiled and vanished in her breast.

And all their afternoons once danced
And sparkled in the sapphire light,
And iris shade, as you have glanced
Green afternoon, in vibrant flight.

As down dim vistas echoing,
Dead afternoons entreat our days,
What breath of beauty will you sing
To souls unseen and unknown ways?

How close, and how unanswering,
Green afternoon, you pulse away,
So little and so great a thing,
Deep towards the bourn of every day.

CITY VESPERS

COME home, my child, come home. The fogs are falling:
Along the blue-walled street the whistles calling:
Along the street ten thousand footsteps falling,
Through steam and smoke-wreath's foam.
Bells cry afar: afar the darkness winging,
Soars throbbing with the chimes and whistles ringing,
The breath of night, the twilight city, singing:
Come home, my child, come home.

Lock fast the locks, drop down the shutters shading,
From shop and counter, counting-house and trading,

From dock-yard, stock-yard, derrick, crane, and lading,
From caisson, clay, and loam,
Come home, my child, come home, in many-chording
And rushing voice, the city sings, from hoarding,
From spending, grudging, judging, and recording,
Come home, my child, come home.

Come from disgrace and honor, craft and scheming,
From work and shirking come, from deed and dreaming,
Success and failure where the lights are streaming
Azure and chrysolite,
Yellow and crystal, where the mists are falling,

The yard-bells ringing, engine whistles calling,
Along the street ten thousand footsteps falling
Come through the dark-blown night.

Where tall-piled height and dusky cornice lower
On storied citadel and tall-crowned tower,
Corner and curb a million arc-lights flower
Full in the twilight air.
If all the foot-falls spoke the destinations
Of all the dreams of all the generations
Upon their way, all shames, all aspirations
Would find their kindred there.

Here steps your fate, my child, your generation
That walks through time to some far consummation
Unknown along the blue street's destination
Through fog and smoke-wreath's foam.

Here flies your life, for worse or better winging
And pulsing with the bells and whistles ringing,
The heart of night, the full-thronged city singing:
Come home, my child, come home.

A CITY EQUINOCTIAL

THE city mists lie dreaming. From afar
Over the sea of roof-tops veiled and hoar
And hung with sapphire lights, the brumal wind,
The rains transpirant break the clouds to stream
On tenement and ware-house, wharf and spire.

The buoy-lights throb. Fog-horns bay. Athwart
Black shaft and chimney pillared in the smoke,
Past high-splashed walls, past corniced street, swart alley
On crane and shack, the rain swings, beautiful—
Oh, beautiful, thrilled with the brumal wind,
Wind of the night, crying full, full and deep
Resurgent from afar.

By rain-whipped roads
By whistling tree, over the wheat-fields bare,

The broken cane, South, North and East and
West,
On bayou, swale, lake, mountain-top and valley
Runs the great storm: Tonight, tonight
Past countless house-walls down this very street
Of my own life it courses—storm of the gulf
Storm of the terraced lakes, the ocean shores
Reverberant afar—wind of the world.

Cry, cry again, great voice,
Voice of the hungry storm,
Cry full and far in beauty. For till now
I never heard your cool-spaced, ragged chords
Break on the city house-tops so profoundly—
Welling and coursing from undying springs,
Pure, pure and deep from countless wells and
springs—
The tone of striving, the clear tone of tears
Inevitable—voice of the surgent world,

The speech of disappointments and desires,
Voice of the urgent world, full, full and deep,
The voice of mortal hungers.

More responsive,
Richly responsive and more beautiful
To me the rain, the wind, the night that tell
Over my country's wide-spread plains and towns
Along a thousand cities' towers and lights,
The strength aspirant of the longing earth,
Than all the high ecstatic hymns and harps
Of an envisioned heaven. Till I heard
Fate, death, desire speak deep for all men, heard
From springs unknown the far, clear tone of tears
Inevitable, from unfathomed keeps,
I could not know nor dream of beauty—hark
To the great broken music of the world,
The hungry storm.

Cry, cry again quick voice, across this street,
My life—
Wind of the world, storm of the world, my world,
On unremembering nights blow back, as now
You cry down corniced street and swart-splashed alley,
Over a thousand cities' spires and lights,
The singing prairie brown-spread, plain and free,
Up from the Gulf, up from the ocean shores,
Resurgent from afar.

BEHIND THE DAY

BEHIND the day a thousand stars, my brother,
Blaze deeply through the snow and sapphire sky
Uncounted trails invisible and other
Than are the clear-crowned ways of night on high.

The things unknown—the things beyond all knowing—
Where first we came from, where our souls shall go,
Pulse still, around us, past the far winds' blowing,
Like day-star trails down heavens' light and snow.

One nearer knowledge, more than any other
I long for. Better than as though the blue
Should speak, were this, through all our world, my brother,
That truly you knew me, and I knew you.

(1)

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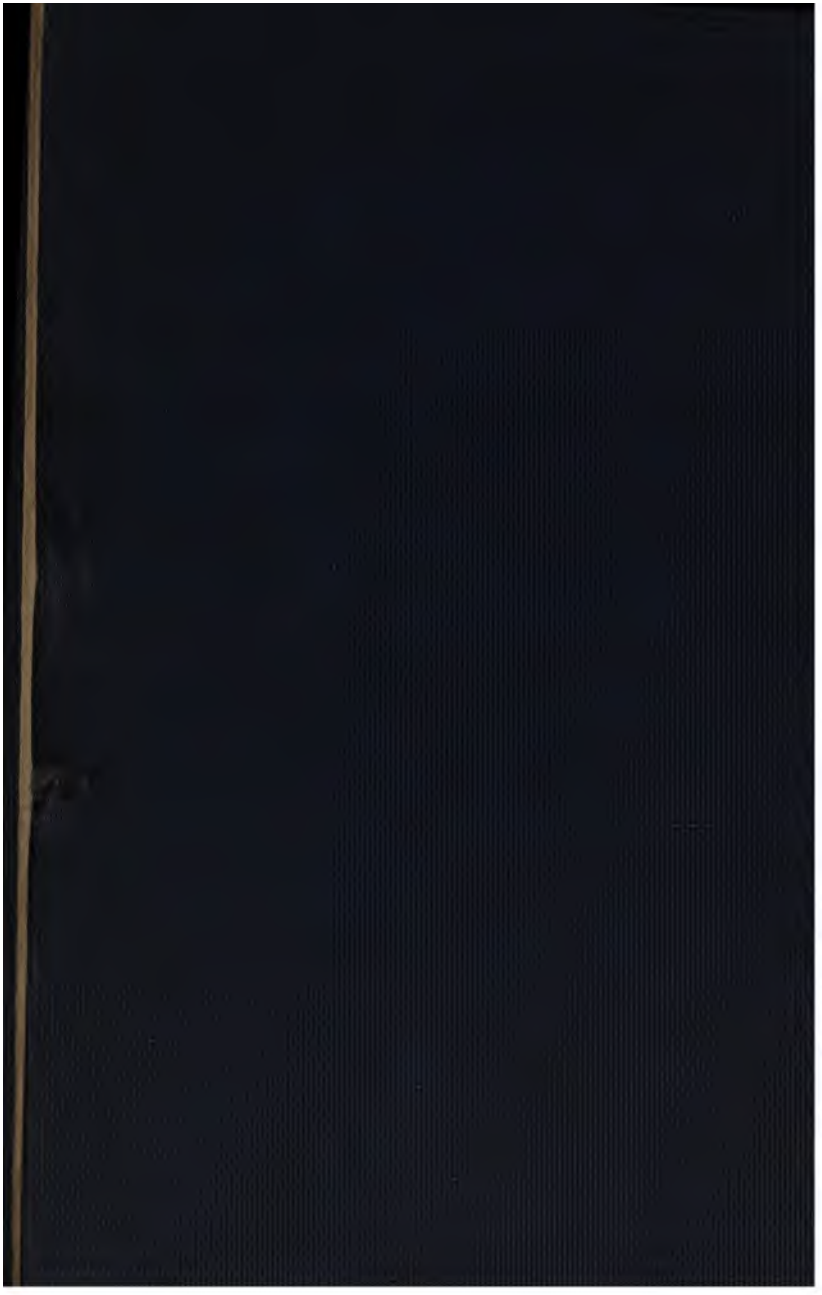
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